

**To:** R1-Press-Gov[R1PressGov@epa.gov]; Spalding, Curt[Spalding.Curt@epa.gov]; Szaro, Deb[Szaro.Deb@epa.gov]  
**From:** Elliott, Rodney  
**Sent:** Fri 8/28/2015 1:50:48 PM  
**Subject:** New England Blog Report - August 28, 2015

---

### Daily Blog Alert

<b>Do Liberals Hate Biofuels?</b>	08/27/2015	Biofuels Digest	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>Ensyn gets EPA approval for RFDiesel</b>	08/27/2015	Biofuels Digest	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>Ensyn gets EPA approval for RFDiesel</b>	08/27/2015	Biofuels Digest	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>How the Clean Power Plan Can Benefit Latino Communities</b>	08/27/2015	Climate 411	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>How the Clean Power Plan Can Benefit Latino Communities</b>	08/27/2015	Climate 411	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>Bobby Jindal: Katrina Anniversary Is Not The Place For 'Liberal Environmental Activism'</b>	08/27/2015	Climate Progress	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>The Grand Canyon is full of mercury</b>	08/27/2015	TreeHugger	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>The Grand Canyon is full of mercury</b>	08/27/2015	TreeHugger	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>What Climate Justice Has To Do With Hurricane Katrina</b>	08/26/2015	Climate Progress	<a href="#">Text</a> <a href="#">View Clip</a>
<b>NATIONAL BRIEFING</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>CAPITOL JOURNAL</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>LETTERS</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>DROUGHT WATCH</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>Road repair done right</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>NATIONAL BRIEFING</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>THE NATION</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>

<b>NATIONAL BRIEFING</b>		Times	
<b>CAPITOL JOURNAL</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>THE DAY IN SPORTS</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>LOS ANGELES</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>BUSINESS BEAT</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>DROUGHT WATCH</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>Road repair done right</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>NATIONAL BRIEFING</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>THE NATION</b>	08/26/2015	Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">Text</a>
<b>Good Oysters Come From Clean Water--and Good Oysters Make Water Cleaner</b>	08/26/2015	TakePart	<a href="#">Text</a>   <a href="#">View Clip</a>

#### **Do Liberals Hate Biofuels? | [View Clip](#)**

**08/27/2015**

##### **Biofuels Digest**

...global market sector; • Sunset the Renewable Fuels Standard as well as EPA's involvement in any reform proposal: sooner for first...

[Return to Top](#)

#### **Ensyn gets EPA approval for RFDiesel | [View Clip](#)**

**08/27/2015**

##### **Biofuels Digest**

...product, RFDiesel. This approval, pursuant to Title 40 CFR Part 79 of the Clean Air Act, is required for the sale of RFDiesel...

[Return to Top](#)

#### **Ensyn gets EPA approval for RFDiesel | [View Clip](#)**

**08/27/2015**

##### **Biofuels Digest**

...New York, Ensyn has been granted a key regulatory approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for its...

[Return to Top](#)

#### **How the Clean Power Plan Can Benefit Latino Communities | [View Clip](#)**

**08/27/2015**

##### **Climate 411**

...Plan make my electric bill more expensive? According to analysis by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Clean Power Plan...

[Return to Top](#)

**How the Clean Power Plan Can Benefit Latino Communities | [View Clip](#)**

**08/27/2015**

**Climate 411**

...concerns and climate change threats to Latinos. I'm talking about the Clean Power Plan, which establishes the first-ever...

[Return to Top](#)

**Bobby Jindal: Katrina Anniversary Is Not The Place For 'Liberal Environmental Activism' | [View Clip](#)**

**08/27/2015**

**Climate Progress**

...can legislate away hurricanes with higher taxes, business regulations and EPA power grabs, that is not a view shared by many Louisianians....

[Return to Top](#)

**The Grand Canyon is full of mercury | [View Clip](#)**

**08/27/2015**

**TreeHugger**

...harvested by anglers in the study area and their levels were below the EPA threshold that would trigger advisories for human consumption....

[Return to Top](#)

**The Grand Canyon is full of mercury | [View Clip](#)**

**08/27/2015**

**TreeHugger**

...harvested by anglers in the study area and their levels were below the EPA threshold that would trigger advisories for human consumption....

[Return to Top](#)

**What Climate Justice Has To Do With Hurricane Katrina | [View Clip](#)**

**08/26/2015**

**Climate Progress**

...climate talks this winter, and on U.S. officials to uphold the president's Clean Power Plan and implement pro-climate...

[Return to Top](#)

**NATIONAL BRIEFING**

**08/26/2015**

**Los Angeles Times**

An internal government investigation has found that federal and state regulators underestimated the

potential for a blowout from a Colorado mine.

The disclosure was contained in documents released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Investigators concluded that EPA and state regulators underestimated how much water pressure had built up inside the inactive mine before a government cleanup crew triggered the release.

The Aug. 5 spill involved 3 million gallons of contaminated water from the idled Gold King Mine near Silverton.

A torrent of toxic water fouled rivers in three states with lead, arsenic, thallium and other heavy metals that can cause health problems and harm aquatic life.

[Return to Top](#)

## **CAPITOL JOURNAL**

**08/26/2015**

**Los Angeles Times**

Gov. Jerry Brown won't be running for president. Don't be silly. He has already run the course. And now he's a geezer.

Anyway, his chief advisor, wife Anne Gust Brown, would kill him.

So it's not worth asking about.

But that's too bad, in a way. Because, age aside, he never has been in better position to run.

Brown has a record he can crow about as governor of the most populous, most diverse state, with the world's eighth-largest economy. He has steered the state budget from a crippling deficit to a healthy surplus. He's still a Washington outsider. He's usually articulate and interesting.

And he's driven, more than any presidential contender, by a cause that's far bigger than any one state: saving the planet by turning down the heat on global warming.

The presidential field is in flux and flimsy. Democratic front-runner Hillary Rodham Clinton is limping badly. Republican front-runner Donald Trump is a circus barker.

"In the current context, especially when you look at the Republican field, it cries out for someone who can be the grown-up in the room and has some gravitas," says veteran Democratic consultant Bill Carrick.

Maybe -- probably -- Brown couldn't get elected president in 2016. But there has never been a wider opening for him. It's the opportunity of his lifetime. If only.

If only he hadn't foolishly run those other times.

In 1976, for crying out loud, he had been governor for only a year, repeating Ronald Reagan's mistake of 1968. Moreover, Brown entered the Democratic primaries very late. He still carried three states and attracted 14% of the total popular vote. But Jimmy Carter won easily.

"When he first got in and won in Maryland, he was the most exciting candidate I'd ever seen," says Carrick, who was working then in Washington. "He was hot as a firecracker."

It was a careless waste of potential.

In 1980, Brown challenged Carter again. Only this time Carter was the incumbent president. And Sen. Ted Kennedy -- Democratic royalty -- also was competing. Brown bombed and dropped out early.

Brown was asked by a reporter earlier this year whether there had been anything in his career he'd like to change. "There are a lot of things I could second-guess," he replied.

"The only thing that seems pretty clear was continuing to run for president in 1980 after Kennedy got in against Carter. That was a very dumb move on my part."

And in 1992, what was that about? Brown had been out of office nine years. He ran like a crazy man -- no discipline, poor planning, dumb moves.

"We are not disorganized. Our campaign transcends understanding," Jacques Barzaghi, Brown's "field director" and longtime aide-de-camp, said then.

One stupid move: Brown naming the Rev. Jesse Jackson as his potential running mate -- the man who had angered New York's many Jewish voters by calling their city "Hymietown."

Brown ran as a populist, the "voice for the voiceless," refusing to accept campaign contributions that exceeded \$100. He later abandoned that notion while rebooting his political career in California.

In 1992, however, he also campaigned as a Wall Streeter, advocating the "flat tax" -- everyone pay the same income tax rate. As governor in 2012, he turned in the extreme opposite direction, selling voters a "soak-the-rich" tax hike that hit only California's wealthiest.

The "prince of sleaze" -- Brown's name for Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton -- walloped the Californian in the decisive New York primary. Still, Brown won six states.

If Brown hadn't been so politically antsy in 1976 and 1980, he just might already have been president.

California voters wouldn't have been so sick of him in 1982. They probably would have elected him U.S. senator over the San Diego mayor, Pete Wilson. Then he would have been

in great position to whip

the Arkansas governor in 1992.

You know that Brown would love to be back running again, especially with the "prince's" wife stumbling.

If he were 10 years younger, Brown told reporters a few months ago, "yes" he would be back on the presidential trail. But he quickly added: "If I could go back in a time machine ... I might jump in. But that's counterfactual, so you don't need to speculate."

Brown is 77. If he ran and won, he'd be older entering the White House than Reagan was leaving it. That's not a selling point.

But also like Reagan and Trump -- excuse this one comparison -- Brown has an appealing ring of authenticity.

He's pretty healthy and not that much older than the leading Democratic contenders. Hillary Clinton is 67. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) is 73. And Vice President Joe Biden, who's edging toward the race, is 72.

"Never count Jerry out," Carrick says. "Many people have written his political eulogy who no longer are involved in politics."

Asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" Sunday why he didn't jump into the race, Brown replied: "I've got a lot to do in California.... I find it completely absorbing and challenging. And I've given myself to this job and I'm going to be fully engaged there."

Too bad Brown didn't say that the first time he was governor.

Now, given his passion for fighting global warming, Brown should consider running for the U.S. Senate in 2018 if Sen. Dianne Feinstein retires. She's 82.

Washington is where global warming needs to be fought.

--

george.skelton@latimes.com

[Return to Top](#)

**LETTERS**  
**08/26/2015**  
**Los Angeles Times**

Testing Trump

Re "News anchor evicted from Trump event," Aug. 26

Donald Trump makes some far-fetched assumptions and incorrect claims about immigrants. One of the most outrageous is his belief that he will get the Latino vote.

Let's take a look at this: He favors forced deportation. He is in favor of building a border wall. He calls immigrants rapists and murderers. He claims immigrants take away jobs. He wants to take away "birthright" citizenship. He blames immigrants for many social problems. He claims immigrants are a drain on our economy, in spite of studies indicating otherwise. He continues to make extreme statements against immigrants. He kicks out of his news conference Jorge Ramos, one of the most respected Spanish-language journalists.

Believe me, Trump will not get the Latino vote.

David Trujillo

Los Angeles

::

Trump has seduced a smattering of supporters despite his comedy of errors and lack of specificity in naming initiatives that have any reasonableness.

I am not a Republican. If I were, my blood would percolate over the manner in which Trump's rivals behave like gutless little boys afraid to open their mouths and defend themselves and their positions. What person allows another man to brand him as stupid before a live audience and millions more by television?

Business acumen is one thing, but transitioning into an effective world leader requires attributes and talents that Trump simply doesn't possess. He would be no match for Vice President Joe Biden or Sen. Bernie Sanders, that's for sure.

I simply say, "Thank you, Mr. Trump, for being the storm that blew the Republican's house of cards to

the winds in 2016, and for the color, buffoonery and audacity with which you mastered the task."

Marjorie Robinson

Los Angeles

--

Addressing Clinton's emails

Re "Her email trouble, explained," Opinion, Aug. 25

Security consultant John R. Schindler's petty attack on Hillary Rodham Clinton is beneath the dignity of The Times. Schindler sums up the weakness of the far right's attack in one sentence: "Even if Clinton was the only recipient of top-secret information, she should've reported the problem." Huh?

With Islamist terrorists hellbent on our destruction, the stock market collapsing, China and North Korea rattling their swords, illegal immigration out of control and race relations strained, the witch hunters are wasting valuable resources investigating something that many of them admit had almost no tangible negative consequence.

To put it into perspective, Clinton's use of a personal email account to conduct official government business is akin to a driver running a "yield" sign without causing harm. Sure, she probably shouldn't have done it, but why not focus our limited resources on more important issues?

Coming from Fox News, this witch hunt is laughable. But when The Times allocates valuable Op-Ed space to the attacks, something is wrong.

Michael Sanchez

Newport Beach

::

I just don't get it. Clinton keeps saying that she would not use her private outgoing or incoming email for classified (at that time) information.

How does that make any sense? How could she possibly control the information on her incoming emails? I am just not buying it.

Guy DeMarco

Temple City

::

If Clinton "was exclusively using a personal email address" for all communications while secretary of State, within weeks of her taking office virtually hundreds of government officials were fully aware that her email extension was not the iconic ".gov."

Yet not a shred of evidence exists that, in the entire four years of her tenure during which Clinton sent and received hundreds of thousands of emails, a single person at Schindler's own National Security Agency or at any other intelligence agency contacted Clinton to inquire about the security of her personal email address or whether it was associated with a separate server, much less propose immediate remedial steps.

Schindler's Monday morning quarterbacking aside, the overriding failure here was that of a federal bureaucracy, whose sheer neglect for four years remains stunning.

Mark E. Kalmansohn

Santa Monica

--

What if Iran gets the bomb?

Re "The risks of saying no to the Iran deal," Opinion, Aug. 23

Joseph Cirincione's Op-Ed article relies on specious arguments, including his statement that the nuclear deal with Iran "has the backing of nearly the entire American security establishment, current and retired, [and] it enjoys the overwhelming support of nuclear scientists and policy experts."

This is questionable. Michael Hayden, former CIA director; Dennis Ross, longtime Mideast negotiator; Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; David Albright, former nuclear weapons inspector and president of the Institute for Science and International Security; and Olli Heinonen, the International Atomic Energy Agency's former deputy director general for safeguards, have all expressed reservations about the deal.

Cirincione's argument amounts to this: Congress must approve the deal and not worry about the 5-year-old who, when he's 15, will be faced with the possibility of a nuclear Iran. Kick the ball down the block for a decade and let others worry about it.

We must have the political courage to say no to this deal because of its flaws.

Jack Salem

Los Angeles

::

History may regard ratifying the Iran deal as the time humanity chose either to continue the status quo of killing one another out of fear or to take a chance on diplomacy, opting for a more enlightened, hopeful belief in who we all can be as people who choose peace.

Such a choice of love over fear takes courage, so it's interesting that for all the countries that followed America's leadership on this deal, our Congress is the only possible holdout for the status quo of fear and violence.

With our belief in the democratic principal of majority rule, it would seem that the other countries have the majority. So what's the problem?

Joanne Tatham

Irvine

--

Car rebates benefit us all

Re "State limits green vehicle rebate," Aug. 24



This article completely missed the point of California's clean vehicle rebate program.

The rebate is available for buyers of pure electric cars and plug-in hybrids. These cars produce zero or low emissions and reduce smog, address climate change and help protect public health. The purpose of the program is to get more of these vehicles built and onto our roads and reduce the number of gasoline cars.

The program benefits everyone in California because we all breathe the same air. Lower-income people in dense urban areas benefit the most because they tend to breathe the worst air.

And despite the comments from the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Assn., the program is hardly "welfare for the rich."

If you carefully examine the graph that accompanied the article, the bulk of the rebates were for the Nissan Leaf, the Chevy Volt and the Toyota Prius -- all cars that, before the rebate, are priced around or slightly below the average for a new car in the United States.

With the rebates, and considering the savings in avoided gasoline and upkeep costs, the vehicles become quite affordable for the average new-car buyer, which is the point of the program.

Joel Levin

San Francisco

The writer is executive director of Plug In America.

--

When life is worse than death

Re "On sparing James Holmes," Aug. 24

Most people assume that death is the ultimate penalty for the worst crimes. I disagree.

Life imprisonment with no possibility of parole seems to be worse. It requires the perpetrator to spend his whole life in contemplation of what he has done. Death frees him from any sense of guilt or responsibility.

Consider our reactions to the death of those we love: The person who has died has no more feelings of any kind. The grief is ours; what we grieve for is our own sense of loss.

James Holmes will be treated for his mental illness and may grasp more fully the awfulness of his acts. If he were to be put to death, he would escape all that.

Donald Schwartz

Los Angeles

[Return to Top](#)

## **DROUGHT WATCH**

**08/26/2015**

**Los Angeles Times**

Here's one trend California is behind on: rising sea levels.

For the last 23 years, ocean levels around the world have climbed by about 3 inches on average, and NASA scientists say the sea will continue to rise as warming temperatures cause ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica to melt.

But California, and the rest of the western United States, has actually seen ocean levels fall. That's about to change, thanks to a shift in weather patterns, and scientists are sounding the alarm.

New satellite measurements from NASA suggest that ocean levels could rise by 3 feet or more globally by the end of the century. The question faced by scientists and policymakers is not whether oceans will rise, but how fast and by how much.

"People need to be prepared for sea level rise," said Joshua Willis, an oceanographer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Canada Flintridge. "It's not going to stop."

--

If ocean levels are rising, where is the additional water coming from?

Steve Nerem, a scientist at the University of Colorado, Boulder, said that about one-third of the rising sea level is a result of the ocean expanding as it absorbs heat trapped by greenhouse gases and becomes warmer. Another third comes from melting glaciers, and the rest comes from the melting of enormous ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica.

--

How much ice is actually melting in Greenland and Antarctica?

During the last decade, Greenland's ice sheet lost about 303 gigatons of ice on average each year, while Antarctica's ice sheet lost about 118 gigatons annually on average. One gigaton is a billion metric tons.

--

Why did California's sea level fall during the last few decades?

Waters off the coast of the western U.S. have had lower surface temperatures, largely because of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, or PDO. This pattern of wind, ocean current and temperature variations can bring warm or cold phases for several years -- or even decades. Since 1998, some scientists say, we have experienced a cold phase that has counteracted the effects of climate change and prevented sea levels from rising.

--

Will California's sea levels always be lower than elsewhere?

No, and scientists say a reversal in the Pacific Decadal Oscillation could cause sea levels to catch up to increases seen elsewhere. According to JPL's Willis, current measurements indicate that a switch in the PDO already occurred.

"We can expect accelerated rates of sea level rise along this coast over the next decade as the region recovers from its temporary sea level 'deficit,' " Willis said.

--

Does this have anything to do with El Nino?

Yes. Some climatologists think of El Nino as a short-term phenomenon that lies on top of the more long-term temperature fluctuations associated with the Pacific Decadal Oscillation. Warmer PDOs are more conducive to El Ninos.

--

What are we supposed to do about rising sea levels?

The key word stressed by scientists: planning. Tom Wagner, cryosphere program manager for NASA, said communities along coastal zones should factor in the increase in sea levels when considering major infrastructure projects such as a water treatment plant or power plant. Rising sea levels could mean more erosion or flooding associated with a storm surge, he said.

--

What's the likelihood that sea levels stay the same or actually fall?

Don't count on it. Over the next century, the sea may rise between 1 1/2 and 3 feet or possibly more, said Eric Rignot, a research scientist at JPL and a professor at UC Irvine. And ice sheets react to warming by melting faster and faster. Any reversal of the inevitable ice melt "would take centuries," he said. "Some of the measurements collected by NASA are an important red flag on what's about to come."

--

[matt.hamilton@latimes.com](mailto:matt.hamilton@latimes.com)

Twitter: [@MattHJourn](https://twitter.com/MattHJourn)

[Return to Top](#)

### **Road repair done right 08/26/2015 Los Angeles Times**

To many California Republicans, it looks like a perfect match. On the one hand, the state can no longer ignore the deferred maintenance of its roads and bridges, not to mention the need for new ones in some areas. On the other, the state has a big pot of money that more than doubled in size to \$2.2 billion this fiscal year, and it doesn't have to be given over to schools, Medicaid or bond debt. Their suggestion: Match the funds with the needs. Problem solved.

One very big problem: The money was raised through the state's cap-and-trade program, and it must be allocated under AB 32, the state's landmark climate change bill, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including those from cars. When AB 32 passed in 2006, the promise was that money from cap-and-trade would be used to fight climate change -- and, to the extent that the two goals fit, also to do other good works. It's inappropriate and, frankly, cynical for the Republicans to suggest that this money be used on projects that not only won't reduce emissions but seem likely to increase them.

Of course, it's hardly the first dubious use of cap-and-trade money. Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, has found the state's climate change fund a convenient way to finance his beloved bullet train, which now gets a quarter of the money in the fund. Former Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg pushed through legislation to spend hefty amounts on affordable housing, a longtime priority of his.

But at least those projects are arguably in keeping with the requirement of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The affordable housing will be located along mass-transit lines and designed to encourage more walking and bicycling. Though construction of the bullet train would actually worsen carbon

emissions in the short run, it's estimated that eventually the train would replace millions of car trips each year with electricity-powered high-speed rail. Still, these two projects are crowding out others that would provide more climate bang for the buck, such as improving local public transit.

For the most part, road building has the opposite effect. It can encourage sprawl and more driving by at least temporarily reducing congestion. There is some evidence that smoother roads increase gas mileage, but so far it's unclear whether road repair is an effective way to reduce carbon emissions. One way in which transportation projects might validly be funded by cap-and-trade money: the creation of bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly streets.

Public trust in the state's cap-and-trade program depends on using the money in ways that will effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions. What's more, other states and nations are less likely to follow California's lead if its cap-and-trade policies are seen as a way to pay for legislators' pet projects rather than as a way to combat global warming.

[Return to Top](#)

## **NATIONAL BRIEFING**

**08/26/2015**

**Los Angeles Times**

An internal government investigation has found that federal and state regulators underestimated the potential for a blowout from a Colorado mine.

The disclosure was contained in documents released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Investigators concluded that EPA and state regulators underestimated how much water pressure had built up inside the inactive mine before a government cleanup crew triggered the release.

The Aug. 5 spill involved 3 million gallons of contaminated water from the idled Gold King Mine near Silverton.

A torrent of toxic water fouled rivers in three states with lead, arsenic, thallium and other heavy metals that can cause health problems and harm aquatic life.

[Return to Top](#)

## **THE NATION**

**08/26/2015**

**Los Angeles Times**

The worst wildfire season in Washington state history could be particularly devastating to the people who have lived here between the Cascade Range and the Rocky Mountains since long before the region became part of the United States.

Like other communities in the rural hills and valleys here, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation -- 12 tribes forced onto a reservation in 1872 -- are fighting to protect their lives, homes and businesses. Yet while most are battling to confine the blaze to the wildlands outside their communities, for the tribes, the vast, drought-stricken forests are almost equally precious -- and not just because they regard the natural world as sacred.

While reservation forests provide habitat for wildlife and canopies beneath which traditional foods like huckleberries grow, trees here also mean money. For decades, Colville has managed nearly half of its 1.4-million-acre reservation for commercial timber harvest, paying for almost a fourth of its \$45-million annual budget.

This year, another timber revenue stream emerged: carbon credits, sold to oil giant BP to allow it to qualify under California's expanding cap-and-trade climate program, which lets companies make up for some of their greenhouse gas emissions by paying to help maintain healthy forests.

This year, the tribes were expecting to sell credits on about 480,000 acres of timber, allowing their forest to act as a remote carbon storage bank for California. They were completing an inventory of how much carbon forests would store. Then the reservation began burning.

"Obviously, this will have a big impact on what that footprint is now," said Cody Disautel, the land and property director for the tribes.

Disautel and many others say the kind of wildfires blazing across Washington in recent weeks are bigger, hotter and last longer than those in the past -- scorching the soil so deeply in some cases that regeneration may take longer than usual. Not only will this year's fire cut into timber harvests, its ferocity raises questions about how reliable Western forests may be as natural carbon storage banks.

"Given the state of the last few years and the trend of global warming and climate change, the California market, the carbon credit market, is probably going to have to reassess what they're doing," said Pat Tonasket, who helps oversee tribal finances and technology. "This might become the norm, if not next year, then within the next few years -- these huge fires."

California's program allows for unpredictable events, creating a kind of insurance pool of credits in case of storms, disease, wildfires or other calamities. Now, the size of that insurance pool may have to increase, said Gary Gero, president of Climate Action Reserve, which helped create the formulas behind California's cap-and-trade-program. "You're probably safe to assume that over time, as the effects of climate change increase, that insurance contribution is likely to go up. It's not likely to be adjusted down."

Carbon credits are controversial, with some environmental groups saying they allow polluters to pay their way to respectability instead of being required to develop more environmentally friendly practices.

Even Pope Francis has taken issue with the idea, saying in his recent encyclical on the environment that "this system seems to provide a quick solution under the guise of a certain commitment to the environment, but in no way does it allow for the radical change which present circumstances require."

Others say credits, however imperfect, can be part of the solution -- providing some good for the environment while also helping some of the poorest people in a region, such as the Colville tribes.

"That's kind of what the carbon credits do -- they pay you to continue managing the way you're managing," Disautel said. "The tribe has the option to go out and cut as much of this timber as they want, but they will pay us to keep it at the current levels."

The more immediate question for the tribes has been how to respond to the current fire. Most of the risk to reservation timber came from the North Star fire, the second largest of the Washington fires. As of Wednesday, it had burned 170,000 acres. Last week, as few as 65 firefighters were at work here, even as the blaze neared 100,000 acres.

"It was kind of a useless effort," one member of the firefighting team said, "like trying to empty the ocean with a bucket."

Now, the number of personnel is nearing 700. Tribal leaders have asked firefighters first to protect lives and property, then to try to preserve valuable timber stands. Disautel said doing so may require fighting the fire more slowly in places deeper in the forests, instead of relying on quicker techniques like allowing it to burn to the edges of major roadways, which can provide convenient fire breaks.

Once everything stops burning, the tribes will see what survived and how many of the burned trees they

can still harvest. The tribes may even see a brief increase in profits. Testifying before Congress last year on tribal forestry practices, Disautel said that after past fires, the tribes have "been able to complete salvage log sales so efficiently that some of the logs were still smoking when they were salvaged."

Those logs will not be able to earn carbon credits, however. Nor will trees in other forests burning across the West.

"What we assume is that as soon as a tree dies," Gero said, "all of its carbon is released into the atmosphere."

--

william.yardley@latimes.com

[Return to Top](#)

**NATIONAL BRIEFING**  
**08/26/2015**  
**Los Angeles Times**

An internal government investigation has found that federal and state regulators underestimated the potential for a blowout from a Colorado mine.

The disclosure was contained in documents released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Investigators concluded that EPA and state regulators underestimated how much water pressure had built up inside the inactive mine before a government cleanup crew triggered the release.

The Aug. 5 spill involved 3 million gallons of contaminated water from the idled Gold King Mine near Silverton.

A torrent of toxic water fouled rivers in three states with lead, arsenic, thallium and other heavy metals that can cause health problems and harm aquatic life.

[Return to Top](#)

**CAPITOL JOURNAL**  
**08/26/2015**  
**Los Angeles Times**

Gov. Jerry Brown won't be running for president. Don't be silly. He has already run the course. And now he's a geezer.

Anyway, his chief advisor, wife Anne Gust Brown, would kill him.

So it's not worth asking about.

But that's too bad, in a way. Because, age aside, he never has been in better position to run.

Brown has a record he can crow about as governor of the most populous, most diverse state, with the world's eighth-largest economy. He has steered the state budget from a crippling deficit to a healthy surplus. He's still a Washington outsider. He's usually articulate and interesting.

And he's driven, more than any presidential contender, by a cause that's far bigger than any one state: saving the planet by turning down the heat on global warming.

The presidential field is in flux and flimsy. Democratic front-runner Hillary Rodham Clinton is limping badly. Republican front-runner Donald Trump is a circus barker.

"In the current context, especially when you look at the Republican field, it cries out for someone who can be the grown-up in the room and has some gravitas," says veteran Democratic consultant Bill Carrick.

Maybe -- probably -- Brown couldn't get elected president in 2016. But there has never been a wider opening for him. It's the opportunity of his lifetime. If only.

If only he hadn't foolishly run those other times.

In 1976, for crying out loud, he had been governor for only a year, repeating Ronald Reagan's mistake of 1968. Moreover, Brown entered the Democratic primaries very late. He still carried three states and attracted 14% of the total popular vote. But Jimmy Carter won easily.

"When he first got in and won in Maryland, he was the most exciting candidate I'd ever seen," says Carrick, who was working then in Washington. "He was hot as a firecracker."

It was a careless waste of potential.

In 1980, Brown challenged Carter again. Only this time Carter was the incumbent president. And Sen. Ted Kennedy -- Democratic royalty -- also was competing. Brown bombed and dropped out early.

Brown was asked by a reporter earlier this year whether there had been anything in his career he'd like to change. "There are a lot of things I could second-guess," he replied.

"The only thing that seems pretty clear was continuing to run for president in 1980 after Kennedy got in against Carter. That was a very dumb move on my part."

And in 1992, what was that about? Brown had been out of office nine years. He ran like a crazy man -- no discipline, poor planning, dumb moves.

"We are not disorganized. Our campaign transcends understanding," Jacques Barzaghi, Brown's "field director" and longtime aide-de-camp, said then.

One stupid move: Brown naming the Rev. Jesse Jackson as his potential running mate -- the man who had angered New York's many Jewish voters by calling their city "Hymietown."

Brown ran as a populist, the "voice for the voiceless," refusing to accept campaign contributions that exceeded \$100. He later abandoned that notion while rebooting his political career in California.

In 1992, however, he also campaigned as a Wall Streeter, advocating the "flat tax" -- everyone pay the same income tax rate. As governor in 2012, he turned in the extreme opposite direction, selling voters a "soak-the-rich" tax hike that hit only California's wealthiest.

The "prince of sleaze" -- Brown's name for Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton -- walloped the Californian in the decisive New York primary. Still, Brown won six states.

If Brown hadn't been so politically antsy in 1976 and 1980, he just might already have been president.

California voters wouldn't have been so sick of him in 1982. They probably would have elected him U.S. senator over the San Diego mayor, Pete Wilson. Then he would have been

in great position to whip

the Arkansas governor in 1992.

You know that Brown would love to be back running again, especially with the "prince's" wife stumbling.

If he were 10 years younger, Brown told reporters a few months ago, "yes" he would be back on the presidential trail. But he quickly added: "If I could go back in a time machine ... I might jump in. But that's counterfactual, so you don't need to speculate."

Brown is 77. If he ran and won, he'd be older entering the White House than Reagan was leaving it. That's not a selling point.

But also like Reagan and Trump -- excuse this one comparison -- Brown has an appealing ring of authenticity.

He's pretty healthy and not that much older than the leading Democratic contenders. Hillary Clinton is 67. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) is 73. And Vice President Joe Biden, who's edging toward the race, is 72.

"Never count Jerry out," Carrick says. "Many people have written his political eulogy who no longer are involved in politics."

Asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" Sunday why he didn't jump into the race, Brown replied: "I've got a lot to do in California.... I find it completely absorbing and challenging. And I've given myself to this job and I'm going to be fully engaged there."

Too bad Brown didn't say that the first time he was governor.

Now, given his passion for fighting global warming, Brown should consider running for the U.S. Senate in 2018 if Sen. Dianne Feinstein retires. She's 82.

Washington is where global warming needs to be fought.

--

george.skelton@latimes.com

[Return to Top](#)

## **THE DAY IN SPORTS**

**08/26/2015**

**Los Angeles Times**

Long after two of the big names at 400 meters had left the track in second and third place, the winner was sprawled on the ground, gasping for breath and getting his pulse checked by a medic.

That's how 23-year-old Wayde van Niekerk of South Africa made a name for himself at the world championships in Beijing on Wednesday night.

A muggy evening at the Bird's Nest started with Usain Bolt laughing as he cruised into the finish of his winning 200-meter semifinal heat to set up another gold-medal showdown with Justin Gatlin. It ended with Van Niekerk topping two Olympic and world champions, LaShawn Merritt and Kirani James, before being carted off the track on a stretcher, then loaded into an ambulance. He was taken to the hospital for precautionary measures, then released later in the evening.

Van Niekerk won in 43.48 seconds, the sixth-best performance of all time. He won by .17 over Merritt,



the 29-year-old, two-time world and 2008 Olympic champion, who himself posted a personal best.

Gatlin enjoyed another easy run in the 200-meter semifinals to set up another showdown with Bolt on Thursday night. Gatlin ran his semifinal heat in 19.87, the second-fastest semifinal ever run at worlds. Bolt won his in 19.95, and was basically jogging to the finish.

Shamier Little and Cassandra Tate finished 2-3 in the 400-meter hurdles to round out the U.S. haul and bring the Americans' disappointing total to nine medals over the first five days of the championships.

Kenya made history when javelin thrower Julius Yego won the first gold medal in a field event for a country renowned as a cradle of distance running.

ETC.

Galaxy's Dunivant to retire after season

Galaxy defender Todd Dunivant, who has won five Major League Soccer titles in a 13-year career, announced that he will retire at the end of the season.

Dunivant, 34, has been limited by injuries to 10 MLS appearances the last two seasons.

-- Kevin Baxter

--

Wayne Rooney ended a 10-game scoring drought by grabbing a hat trick in Manchester United's 4-0 win at Bruges in Belgium that eased the English team into the Champions League group stage. United won 7-1 on aggregate and returned to Europe's premier competition after a one-year absence.

--

Ana Dabovic scored nine of her 18 points in the fourth quarter, including a go-ahead basket with 6.1 seconds left, and the Sparks defeated Indiana, 81-79, at Indianapolis, ending the Fever's six-game winning streak.

Candace Parker had 15 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the Sparks (11-17).

--

Left-hander Adam Cramer struck out 13 in five innings, and undefeated Lewisberry, Pa. -- the closest thing to a home team in the Little League World Series -- defeated Pearland, Texas, 3-0, for a berth in the U.S. bracket title game. Pearland plays Bonita, Calif., on Thursday for a spot in the U.S. title game against Lewisberry.

--

Ohio State sophomore receiver Noah Brown is out for the season after suffering a leg injury in practice. ... East Carolina quarterback Kurt Benkert will miss the season with a knee injury that comes a week after the sophomore was named the starter.

--

In a battle of big hitters, second-seeded Kevin Anderson of South Africa defeated 2014 finalist Jerzy Janowicz of Poland, 7-6 (2), 6-4, to advance to the quarterfinals of the Winston-Salem (N.C.) Open. Steve Johnson, the former USC star who is the lone American left in the final U.S. Open tuneup, upset third-seeded Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France, 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (4).

--

Seventh-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland beat France's Alize Cornet, 6-4, 6-2, to advance to the Connecticut Open quarterfinals in New Haven. Third-seeded Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark outlasted Italy's Roberta Vinci, 6-4, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (7).

[Return to Top](#)

**LOS ANGELES**  
**08/26/2015**  
**Los Angeles Times**

A key Los Angeles City Council committee on Wednesday moved to soften a controversial new homeless sweeps law, voting to omit arrests and fines for people who refuse to give up their property or put it in storage.

The council's homelessness and poverty committee also passed an amendment to tie enforcement of the measure to expanding storage citywide for homeless people. The vote on dropping the penalties was 3-2, with Councilmen Jose Huizar, Marqueece Harris-Dawson and Gil Cedillo in the majority, and Curren Price and Mike Bonin opposed.

The ordinance would make it easier for the city to clear homeless camps from sidewalks and other public spaces.

The committee referred to the full council a staff report on providing showers, restrooms and storage bins for people living in the streets.

Committee members repeatedly said they had "decriminalized" the measure, which became law July 18 but was put on hold while amendments are considered. Any changes require approval by the full council and the mayor.

Homeless people who resist orders to impound or give up their possessions or fold up their tents could still be cited or arrested under a general city code for failure to comply with officers' orders, police said during the committee meeting.

The proposed penalties had drawn fierce opposition from civil rights lawyers, clergy and homeless advocates, who accused council members of criminalizing homelessness and trying to push indigent people out of rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods, including downtown and Venice.

Downtown interests turned out in support of the ordinance as written, including Marie Rumsey, legislative director for the Central City Assn. of Los Angeles, a business group.

"There are many rights downtown, including the rights of the community to have clean and safe sidewalks," Rumsey said.

Opponents said homeless people can't pay tickets, which go to warrant, landing them in jail or disqualifying them from housing and jobs.

The legal wreckage routine traffic tickets can inflict on very poor people was on display earlier in the day at the Midnight Mission, where more than 100 people, most of them homeless, lined up to have their records wiped clean of fines and warrants.

The occasion was a skid row homeless court and citation clinic organized by City Atty. Mike Feuer. Participants could have tickets, fines and warrants dismissed in exchange for four hours per citation of community service, or enrollment in drug counseling, employment preparation or other programs.

David Martinez, 67, said he lost his car, his license and his livelihood because of \$950 in traffic tickets triggered when his vehicle broke down in Tijuana.

"That's like debtors' prison," he said. "Only in America, I swear."

Others said they faced thousands of dollars of sanctions for parking tickets. Sharon Burke racked up \$8,000 in fines and spent two weeks in jail when an unpaid citation for evading a train fare was discovered during her shoplifting arrest, she said.

"It's a big debt," she said. "I'll pay every penny back in community service if I can start fresh and get me another car."

"We've seen a lot of people's lives turned around," Songhai Miguda-Armstead, supervising deputy city attorney, said of the program, which was recently revived after a hiatus because of recession-era cutbacks.

The Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles was one of half a dozen agencies with representatives stationed at card tables to help people get on welfare, find jobs and housing and fix their records.

Attorney Nicole Perez said another option for the city would be to stop citing homeless people altogether.

"They're citing people for jaywalking and sleeping on the street," Perez said.

Her colleague, Gerald Murphy, added: "I'm in court twice a week with clients cited for that."

--

[gale.holland@latimes.com](mailto:gale.holland@latimes.com)

Twitter: [@geholland](https://twitter.com/geholland)

[Return to Top](#)

**BUSINESS BEAT**  
**08/26/2015**  
**Los Angeles Times**

California's growers enjoyed near-record revenue for their crops last year, despite dropping their harvest by 640,000 acres in 2014, a new study suggests.

Agricultural employment soared to a record 417,000 jobs, largely because gains in the Central Coast, deserts and Sacramento River Valley overcame losses in the San Joaquin Valley, according to a report by the Pacific Institute, a nonprofit public policy organization in Oakland.

Employment during the third quarter of the year, the peak season for agriculture, rose by 3,100 jobs from the same quarter in 2013, according to the report. Agricultural employment has increased by 9,000 jobs annually for each of the last four years, the report found.

The somewhat paradoxical near-record revenue and job growth at a time when harvested acreage dropped to a 15-year low were the result of growers adopting more efficient use of water and converting to higher-value crops such as nuts, according to the study. Acreage dedicated to fruit and nuts has risen 24% since 2000, according to the study.

But productivity gains came at the expense of overdrawing the Central Valley's groundwater as surface

supplies were cut, said study co-author Heather Cooley, water program director for the institute.

"There are some things that we can be doing more of, and things that we need to be doing less of," Cooley said.

Many higher-value crops also require more labor, partially explaining the rise in employment, according to the report.

County-level data for 2014 are not available, but probably will show serious differences in both revenue and employment.

Models from UC Davis have projected that the drought will erase 10,000 jobs and siphon \$1.8 billion from agriculture this year, which would cause \$2.7 billion in wider damage to the state economy. With about \$46 billion in revenue, agriculture accounts for only about 2.4% of the state's \$1.9-trillion economy, UC Davis says.

"Undoubtedly, even though we had high revenues, it would've been higher without the drought," Cooley said.

Agriculture revenues dropped by \$480 million, or about 1.4%, from record 2013 levels, the Pacific Institute study said. Even with the loss, 2014 revenues were well above those of non-drought years, the study said.

The study was based on analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the state Employment Development Department.

--

geoffrey.mohan@latimes.com

[Return to Top](#)

**DROUGHT WATCH**  
**08/26/2015**  
**Los Angeles Times**

Here's one trend California is behind on: rising sea levels.

For the last 23 years, ocean levels around the world have climbed by about 3 inches on average, and NASA scientists say the sea will continue to rise as warming temperatures cause ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica to melt.

But California, and the rest of the western United States, has actually seen ocean levels fall. That's about to change, thanks to a shift in weather patterns, and scientists are sounding the alarm.

New satellite measurements from NASA suggest that ocean levels could rise by 3 feet or more globally by the end of the century. The question faced by scientists and policymakers is not whether oceans will rise, but how fast and by how much.

"People need to be prepared for sea level rise," said Joshua Willis, an oceanographer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Canada Flintridge. "It's not going to stop."

--

If ocean levels are rising, where is the additional water coming from?

Steve Nerem, a scientist at the University of Colorado, Boulder, said that about one-third of the rising sea level is a result of the ocean expanding as it absorbs heat trapped by greenhouse gases and becomes warmer. Another third comes from melting glaciers, and the rest comes from the melting of enormous ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica.

--

How much ice is actually melting in Greenland and Antarctica?

During the last decade, Greenland's ice sheet lost about 303 gigatons of ice on average each year, while Antarctica's ice sheet lost about 118 gigatons annually on average. One gigaton is a billion metric tons.

--

Why did California's sea level fall during the last few decades?

Waters off the coast of the western U.S. have had lower surface temperatures, largely because of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, or PDO. This pattern of wind, ocean current and temperature variations can bring warm or cold phases for several years -- or even decades. Since 1998, some scientists say, we have experienced a cold phase that has counteracted the effects of climate change and prevented sea levels from rising.

--

Will California's sea levels always be lower than elsewhere?

No, and scientists say a reversal in the Pacific Decadal Oscillation could cause sea levels to catch up to increases seen elsewhere. According to JPL's Willis, current measurements indicate that a switch in the PDO already occurred.

"We can expect accelerated rates of sea level rise along this coast over the next decade as the region recovers from its temporary sea level 'deficit,' " Willis said.

--

Does this have anything to do with El Nino?

Yes. Some climatologists think of El Nino as a short-term phenomenon that lies on top of the more long-term temperature fluctuations associated with the Pacific Decadal Oscillation. Warmer PDOs are more conducive to El Ninos.

--

What are we supposed to do about rising sea levels?

The key word stressed by scientists: planning. Tom Wagner, cryosphere program manager for NASA, said communities along coastal zones should factor in the increase in sea levels when considering major infrastructure projects such as a water treatment plant or power plant. Rising sea levels could mean more erosion or flooding associated with a storm surge, he said.

--

What's the likelihood that sea levels stay the same or actually fall?

Don't count on it. Over the next century, the sea may rise between 1 1/2 and 3 feet or possibly more,

said Eric Rignot, a research scientist at JPL and a professor at UC Irvine. And ice sheets react to warming by melting faster and faster. Any reversal of the inevitable ice melt "would take centuries," he said. "Some of the measurements collected by NASA are an important red flag on what's about to come."

--

[matt.hamilton@latimes.com](mailto:matt.hamilton@latimes.com)

Twitter: [@MattHjourn](https://twitter.com/MattHjourn)

[Return to Top](#)

## **Road repair done right**

### **08/26/2015**

### **Los Angeles Times**

To many California Republicans, it looks like a perfect match. On the one hand, the state can no longer ignore the deferred maintenance of its roads and bridges, not to mention the need for new ones in some areas. On the other, the state has a big pot of money that more than doubled in size to \$2.2 billion this fiscal year, and it doesn't have to be given over to schools, Medicaid or bond debt. Their suggestion: Match the funds with the needs. Problem solved.

One very big problem: The money was raised through the state's cap-and-trade program, and it must be allocated under AB 32, the state's landmark climate change bill, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including those from cars. When AB 32 passed in 2006, the promise was that money from cap-and-trade would be used to fight climate change -- and, to the extent that the two goals fit, also to do other good works. It's inappropriate and, frankly, cynical for the Republicans to suggest that this money be used on projects that not only won't reduce emissions but seem likely to increase them.

Of course, it's hardly the first dubious use of cap-and-trade money. Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, has found the state's climate change fund a convenient way to finance his beloved bullet train, which now gets a quarter of the money in the fund. Former Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg pushed through legislation to spend hefty amounts on affordable housing, a longtime priority of his.

But at least those projects are arguably in keeping with the requirement of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The affordable housing will be located along mass-transit lines and designed to encourage more walking and bicycling. Though construction of the bullet train would actually worsen carbon emissions in the short run, it's estimated that eventually the train would replace millions of car trips each year with electricity-powered high-speed rail. Still, these two projects are crowding out others that would provide more climate bang for the buck, such as improving local public transit.

For the most part, road building has the opposite effect. It can encourage sprawl and more driving by at least temporarily reducing congestion. There is some evidence that smoother roads increase gas mileage, but so far it's unclear whether road repair is an effective way to reduce carbon emissions. One way in which transportation projects might validly be funded by cap-and-trade money: the creation of bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly streets.

Public trust in the state's cap-and-trade program depends on using the money in ways that will effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions. What's more, other states and nations are less likely to follow California's lead if its cap-and-trade policies are seen as a way to pay for legislators' pet projects rather than as a way to combat global warming.

[Return to Top](#)

## **NATIONAL BRIEFING**

**08/26/2015**  
**Los Angeles Times**

An internal government investigation has found that federal and state regulators underestimated the potential for a blowout from a Colorado mine.

The disclosure was contained in documents released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Investigators concluded that EPA and state regulators underestimated how much water pressure had built up inside the inactive mine before a government cleanup crew triggered the release.

The Aug. 5 spill involved 3 million gallons of contaminated water from the idled Gold King Mine near Silverton.

A torrent of toxic water fouled rivers in three states with lead, arsenic, thallium and other heavy metals that can cause health problems and harm aquatic life.

[Return to Top](#)

**THE NATION**  
**08/26/2015**  
**Los Angeles Times**

The worst wildfire season in Washington state history could be particularly devastating to the people who have lived here between the Cascade Range and the Rocky Mountains since long before the region became part of the United States.

Like other communities in the rural hills and valleys here, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation -- 12 tribes forced onto a reservation in 1872 -- are fighting to protect their lives, homes and businesses. Yet while most are battling to confine the blaze to the wildlands outside their communities, for the tribes, the vast, drought-stricken forests are almost equally precious -- and not just because they regard the natural world as sacred.

While reservation forests provide habitat for wildlife and canopies beneath which traditional foods like huckleberries grow, trees here also mean money. For decades, Colville has managed nearly half of its 1.4-million-acre reservation for commercial timber harvest, paying for almost a fourth of its \$45-million annual budget.

This year, another timber revenue stream emerged: carbon credits, sold to oil giant BP to allow it to qualify under California's expanding cap-and-trade climate program, which lets companies make up for some of their greenhouse gas emissions by paying to help maintain healthy forests.

This year, the tribes were expecting to sell credits on about 480,000 acres of timber, allowing their forest to act as a remote carbon storage bank for California. They were completing an inventory of how much carbon forests would store. Then the reservation began burning.

"Obviously, this will have a big impact on what that footprint is now," said Cody Disautel, the land and property director for the tribes.

Disautel and many others say the kind of wildfires blazing across Washington in recent weeks are bigger, hotter and last longer than those in the past -- scorching the soil so deeply in some cases that regeneration may take longer than usual. Not only will this year's fire cut into timber harvests, its ferocity raises questions about how reliable Western forests may be as natural carbon storage banks.

"Given the state of the last few years and the trend of global warming and climate change, the California market, the carbon credit market, is probably going to have to reassess what they're doing,"

said Pat Tonasket, who helps oversee tribal finances and technology. "This might become the norm, if not next year, then within the next few years -- these huge fires."

California's program allows for unpredictable events, creating a kind of insurance pool of credits in case of storms, disease, wildfires or other calamities. Now, the size of that insurance pool may have to increase, said Gary Gero, president of Climate Action Reserve, which helped create the formulas behind California's cap-and-trade-program. "You're probably safe to assume that over time, as the effects of climate change increase, that insurance contribution is likely to go up. It's not likely to be adjusted down."

Carbon credits are controversial, with some environmental groups saying they allow polluters to pay their way to respectability instead of being required to develop more environmentally friendly practices.

Even Pope Francis has taken issue with the idea, saying in his recent encyclical on the environment that "this system seems to provide a quick solution under the guise of a certain commitment to the environment, but in no way does it allow for the radical change which present circumstances require."

Others say credits, however imperfect, can be part of the solution -- providing some good for the environment while also helping some of the poorest people in a region, such as the Colville tribes.

"That's kind of what the carbon credits do -- they pay you to continue managing the way you're managing," Disautel said. "The tribe has the option to go out and cut as much of this timber as they want, but they will pay us to keep it at the current levels."

The more immediate question for the tribes has been how to respond to the current fire. Most of the risk to reservation timber came from the North Star fire, the second largest of the Washington fires. As of Wednesday, it had burned 170,000 acres. Last week, as few as 65 firefighters were at work here, even as the blaze neared 100,000 acres.

"It was kind of a useless effort," one member of the firefighting team said, "like trying to empty the ocean with a bucket."

Now, the number of personnel is nearing 700. Tribal leaders have asked firefighters first to protect lives and property, then to try to preserve valuable timber stands. Disautel said doing so may require fighting the fire more slowly in places deeper in the forests, instead of relying on quicker techniques like allowing it to burn to the edges of major roadways, which can provide convenient fire breaks.

Once everything stops burning, the tribes will see what survived and how many of the burned trees they can still harvest. The tribes may even see a brief increase in profits. Testifying before Congress last year on tribal forestry practices, Disautel said that after past fires, the tribes have "been able to complete salvage log sales so efficiently that some of the logs were still smoking when they were salvaged."

Those logs will not be able to earn carbon credits, however. Nor will trees in other forests burning across the West.

"What we assume is that as soon as a tree dies," Gero said, "all of its carbon is released into the atmosphere."

--

[william.yardley@latimes.com](mailto:william.yardley@latimes.com)

[Return to Top](#)

**Good Oysters Come From Clean Water--and Good Oysters Make Water Cleaner | [View Clip](#)**



**08/26/2015**

**TakePart**

...government regulations (our tax dollars at work), starting with the Clean Water Act of 1972. I, for one, have never met an...

[Return to Top](#)